

Public Attitude towards Inclusion of Children with Special Needs in Mainstream Classes in Indonesia

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Abstract—The inclusion children with special needs (CSN) in mainstream classes is intensively promoted by the Indonesian government, but it seems that the public enthusiasm is low in implementing it. Therefore it is important to know the public attitude towards inclusion of CSN in mainstream class. This study was aimed to know the public attitude towards the inclusion of CSN in mainstream classes. Instrument in this study was Attitude towards Inclusion of CSN in Mainstream Classes Questionnaire, which was developed based on previous studies and opened questionnaire which was distributed to 19 preliminary participants. The questionnaire was built with three dimensions perceived benefits, perceived inefficiency, and perceived teacher's difficulties which distributed by online survey. There were 240 participants involved in this research. The result found that there is no differences in participant based on having CSN as contact, but there are some differences in participants with different occupation

Keywords— children with special needs; mainstream classes

I. INTRODUCTION

Education for children with special needs (CSN) is quite complex, especially in Indonesia, where most schools that allow CSN to join the school are special schools. But this number of these schools are very limited. There are only 1962 special schools for 1.6 million CSN[1], and thus resulted only 10 percent or around 160.000 CSN who join the formal education[2].

Indonesian government also pays some attention in this matter and has issued some policies in order to include CSN in mainstream education such as Constitution number 20 in 2003 and Ministry of Education Regulations in 2009 which mentioned that education is provided to all children without any discrimination [3].

In spite of these policies, special needs children are still excluded from the mainstream schools. One of the reasons is because CSN are considered having intellectual disabilities no matter what types of problems CSN actually have[4]. Neighborhood schools are very important for CSN since those schools are more convenient they can get, compare to special schools which are limited to certain area. Therefore they should not be excluded because of the learning differences [5].

There are some positive[6, 7] and negative outcomes regarding the inclusion of CSN in mainstream classes. Some

research[6,7] found that by including CSN, students showed some gains in reading but showed no difference in math, language, and spelling. But it is also found that CSN who study in inclusive classrooms had lower self-esteem[6].

The fact that there are some differences between CSN and typical developing child (TDC) is one of the reasons of the reluctance in including CSN and the different treatments people give to CSN which lower the CSN self-esteem [8-10].

The positive and negative effects in including CSN in mainstream classes is also influenced by the attitudes towards the inclusion of CSN in mainstream class. One study[11] found that by having positive attitudes and good cooperation from parents and teachers, both CSN and TDC showed positive outcomes in a mainstream class. Daminadou[12] found that teachers who had negative attitude towards inclusion CSN in mainstream education also have low expectation for CSN.

The negative attitude and low expectation for CSN tend to make teachers evaluate CSN negatively[13].The same things also found in the TDC, Srivastava, et.al. [14], reported that TDC who have negative attitudes towards CSN will reject or exclude their peers with special needs.

Therefore, it is important for us to know public attitude towards the inclusion of CSN in mainstream classes. Moreover, the policy concerning the inclusion of CSN in mainstream classes is quite new in Indonesia. The policies issuing are also followed by fund given by the government in order to enhance the CSN inclusion enthusiasm by schools[2]

Despite the efforts government gives, the schools still give less chance for CSN in joining their classes[15], this is due to the negative perception from parents, teachers, and society. Therefore, it is important to know and to understand the attitude towards inclusion of CSN in mainstream class, not only parents', teachers', or students, but also society. But less is known about society or general attitude towards inclusion of CSN in mainstream class.

Public attitude towards inclusion of CSN in mainstream class is important, for the public or society also play important roles with policy makers, educators, and other stakeholders. Therefore this research aimed to know what the public attitude towards inclusion of CSN is in mainstream class.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Attitude

Allport in Fishbein and Ajzen[16] define attitudes as:

"A mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon an individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related"

In line with this definitions Myers[17] mentioned that attitude is a belief and emotions related to someone or some events in which produced behavior tendency.

Based on these definitions, we conclude that attitude is one's evaluation on an object or situation which based on one's belief on that particular object or situation which favourable or unfavourable which has tendency of behavior.

Attitude towards inclusion of CSN in mainstream class is one's evaluation towards inclusion of CSN in general education which is favourable or unfavourable and has tendency of behavior. Based on these definitions, we know that attitude can lead someone in doing some behavior, therefore attitude is a very interesting topic to be investigated[18].

B. Attitudes towards inclusion of CSN in mainstream class

There are few research which investigated public attitude towards inclusion of CSN in mainstream class, therefore this research will formulate attitudes from parents, teachers, and students on the inclusion of CSN in mainstream education.

Based on the current research, most parents with TDC and CSN had neutral to positive attitude towards inclusion of CSN in mainstream class, due to the benefits perceived by parents in both CSN and TDC. The perceived benefits emerged due to some aspects:

1. Equality

Both parents of CSN and TDC believes that CSN have the same right to get the formal education TDC[19-23], both children will have good influences to each other[24] and will help both children to understand the real world which consists of diversity [20, 25].

2. Developmental progress

Parents with CSN reported that by including CSN in the mainstream class, CSN learned how to socialize with other and life skills which increase their progress in development[26]. Meanwhile for TDC, both parents believed that TDC would develop empathy, helpful behavior, and also other emotion development [25]. Parents with CSN also mentioned that by having special needs does not necessarily mean that CSN have cognitive problems, therefore they also have capacity to learn in mainstream education[27].

Despite the perceived benefits, there are some consideration that makes parents and teachers disagreed with idea of including CSN in mainstream education:

1. Perceived Inefficiency

Including CSN in mainstream classes is considered not efficient for some parents and most teachers. The different condition of CSN makes teachers and schools need to prepare many things such as equipment, teaching materials and instruments, curriculum modifications, and assessments [28], funds and equipment [13], and the class time allocation [29].

2. Perceived Teachers' difficulties.

Apart from efficiency, parents and teachers worry that the inclusion will give difficulties to general education (GE) teachers. The doubt is mostly about if the teachers are able to teach CSN. GE teachers who teach CSN often reported that they were lack of capability in teaching CSN, this is caused by less or no training in teaching CSN [30-32].

C. Factors that influence attitude towards the inclusion of SEN in mainstream education

1. Contact

One of problems related to CSN and mainstream classes is that CSN are stigmatized that they are notable to study in mainstream class. One of way to reduce stigma is when physical proximity is reduced the initial prejudice between the majority and minority will be increased[33].

Allport[34] proposed:

"Contacts that bring knowledge and acquaintance are likely to engender sounder beliefs concerning minority groups, and for this reason contribute to the reduction of prejudice".

Therefore if a person have someone or some people with special needs as an acquaintance whom are minorities, that person is likely to have less prejudice towards CSN which may lead to positive attitude towards inclusion of CSN in mainstream education.

Eises et.al [35] proposed that people are generally afraid to something they do not know including some group that are considered unfamiliar, therefore if people are exposed to members of groups, and gain more knowledge, understanding and experience of the groups, people will be less hostile.

By having contact or acquaintance, a person will have more familiarity compare to the person who does not have any contact or acquaintance with special need. Meanwhile, the familiarity with CSN person is related to less stigmatizing attitudes towards CSN[36].

2. Occupations

There are some connections between Occupations and attitude towards inclusion of CSN in mainstream classes. Leyser and Kirk [37] found that parents who have unskilled / semi-skilled and skilled occupations have more positive attitudes compare to parents who work as professionals. Added to these findings Luke dan Grosche [38] found that people who work in education-related occupations have positive attitudes toward inclusion of CSN in mainstream classes.

In this research we defined unskilled and semi-skilled occupations as occupations that does not require certain

education level backgrounds such as housewife, security, labor, etc. Skilled occupations are occupations that need certain education level background such as employee in a company, public servant, etc.

Meanwhile professional occupations are occupations that require special education majors in order to have it such as doctors, architect, nurse, therapist, etc. We separate the education related occupation in consideration to the previous research, education-related occupations is defined as occupations that involve educating people whether in formal or informal settings such as teachers, lecturers, etc.

3. Familiarity with inclusive education term

Familiarity or having heard of inclusive education may influence attitude towards the inclusion of CSN in mainstream education. Since people who is familiar on certain subject can predict one's favorable attitude[39].

D. Research questions

There are some research questions proposed;

1. What is the public attitude towards the inclusion of CSN in mainstream class in Indonesia?
2. Is there any difference in public attitude towards the inclusion of CSN in mainstream class in Indonesia in people who have contact and who does not have contact with CSN?
3. Is there any difference in attitude towards the inclusion of CSN in mainstream class in Indonesia on people who have different occupations background?
4. Is there any difference in attitude towards the inclusion of CSN in mainstream class in Indonesia based on having heard of inclusive education term?

III. RESEARCH METHODS

This research was aimed to investigate public attitude towards inclusion of CSN in mainstream class, therefore this research adapted Online Survey with Convenient Sampling which is considered the most appropriate for this aim and the limitation of time and distance of the researcher:

A. Participants

Online survey were distributed by social media platforms and email, the duration of data collection is on January 2018 - June 2018.

Initial numbers of the participants is 246, but only 240 data is usable. There were 73 males and 167 females in this study. There are 157 participants who have heard the term of inclusive education. The majority of the participants were university graduated (169 participants). The occupations of the participants are quite vary, thus the occupations were divided into three categories, unskilled or semi-skilled which means there is no education level requirements in order to have the occupations, skilled means there is some education level requirements in order to have the occupations, and professional is when the occupations require special skills or special / higher education.

In educational-related category, there are 4 missing data from 240 participants which were not analyzed.

TABLE I. DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Demographic factors	Table Head Category	Frequency	Total
Sex	Male	73	240
	Female	167	
Educational Background	High School	32	240
	College / university	187	
	Post graduate	21	
	High School	32	
Occupations	Unskilled / semi-skilled	45	240
	Skilled	108	
	Professional	30	
	Education-related	43	
	Missing	4	
Have Children	Yes	65	240
	No	175	
Heard about inclusive education	Yes	157	240
	No	83	
Have CSN Contact / Acquaintance	Yes	152	240
	No	88	

B. Measurement Instrument

Due to the limited research concerning public attitude, it was quite difficult to find instrument for measuring the public attitude towards inclusion of CSN in mainstream class. Therefore a new instrument was made.

Instrument used in this research is Attitude towards Inclusion of CSN in Mainstream Classes Questionnaire which was developed by the researcher. Opened preliminary questionnaire were conducted to understand the general attitude and perception and were distributed online due to the limited time and distance of the researcher. The opened preliminary questionnaire was responded by 19 willing participants. The answers were analyzed together with the previous studies and resulted 6 dimensions and 30 items.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy indicated that the strength of the relationships among variables was high (KMO = .91). Perceived benefits subscale ($\alpha = 0.92$), the perceived inefficiency ($\alpha = 0.81$), and perceived teacher's difficulties ($\alpha = 0.91$), the overall attitude towards inclusion of CSN questionnaire has a quite good reliability ($\alpha = 0.70$), thus it was acceptable to proceed with the analysis. The number of items in perceived benefits, perceived inefficiency, and perceived teacher's difficulty are 10, 5, and 3 respectively.

Based on the Factor Analysis some items and dimensions were removed. Equality and Personal Development dimensions were integrated to Perceived Benefits dimension, meanwhile Perceived Inefficiency become second dimension, and Perceived Teachers' Difficulties become third dimension with theory remained the same.

TABLE II. PATTERN MATRIX FOR ATTITUDE TOWARDS INCLUSION OF CSN IN MAINSTREAM CLASS

Scale Items	Factors			Total
	1	2	3	
Special needs students have the right to go to the regular school.	0.57			
Placing special needs student at regular class will make them feel equal to the regular students.	0.72			
I believe that the placement special needs students at regular class will make all the students understand and accept human diversity.	0.75			
I am certain that by placing special needs students at regular class will give an image about the real society to all the students.	0.76			
Students who have special needs classmates will be easier to mingle with people who physically and behaviourally different from them.	0.63			
Placing the special needs students at regular class will make the students be more sensitive to their friends' needs.	0.71			
Placing special students at regular class will train students' patience and care for others.	0.79			
Placing special needs students at regular class will enhance academic performance of special needs students who do not have problem with intelligence.	0.68			
I am certain that by joining regular class, special needs students will learn from regular students how to communicate and to socialize better.	0.80			
I am certain that by placing special needs students at regular class will enhance tolerance of all students, especially regular students.	0.83			
I am certain that by placing special needs students at regular class, will slow down the learning process.		0.79		
The special needs students' placement at regular class is not efficient due to the requirements of more teaching materials.		0.82		
The special needs students' placement at regular class is not efficient due to the requirements of more financial budgets.		0.72		
The special needs students' placement at regular class is not efficient due to the requirements of more facilities.		0.79		
The special needs students' placement at regular class is not efficient because the learning materials should be adjusted with both students' needs.		0.83		
I am certain that regular teacher do not have competency to teach SEN			0.77	

Scale Items	Factors			Total
	1	2	3	
I am certain that regular teachers cannot divide their attentions to students with and without special needs.			0.77	
I am certain that regular teachers will face difficulties to handle special needs students.			0.81	
Percentage of Variance	30.72	21.98	12.49	65.19
Eigenvalue	5.53	3.96	2.25	11.73
Cronbach's Alpha	0.92	0.81	0.91	0.70

C. Data Analysis

This research was aimed to investigate the differences in the attitude towards inclusion, therefore analysis of variance is used in this research.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Attitude towards the inclusion of CSN in mainstream class in Indonesia

Different from most of the researches which found positive attitude towards inclusive education, this research found slightly different result, the participants tend to have relatively negative attitude towards inclusion of CSN in mainstream class ($M = 2.91, SD = .72$).

This differences might be caused by the different characteristic of the participants. There are two main participants' characteristic which is investigated with attitude towards inclusive education, which are teachers [13, 28, 40, 41] and parents [19-23, 25]. Meanwhile the participants characteristic in this research were varied, teachers and parents are less dominant characteristic.

These differences might give a different understanding and different depth of knowledge which influence the attitude towards inclusive education. The participants in this research probably do not get a clear idea about what and how the inclusion of CSN is conducted, which resulted a relatively negative attitude.

B. Attitude towards the inclusion of CSN in mainstream class in Indonesia based on having contact with CSN

Having CSN as a contact or acquaintance or not having CSN as a contact or acquaintance does not seem to influence the participants' attitude in this research.

Based on the data analysis, we found that participants who have contact ($M = 2.91, SD = 0.77$) and do not have contact with CSN or special needs person ($M = 2.92, SD = 0.64$). Held a relative negative attitude towards inclusion of CSN in mainstream classes as we can see from the TABLE III.

TABLE III. MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF ATTITUDE TOWARDS INCLUSION OF CSN IN MAINSTREAM CLASS ON HAVING CSN CONTACT

Have Contact	M	SD	N
Yes	2.91	0.77	152
No	2.92	0.65	88

TABLE IV. SUMMARY OF ANOVA OF ATTITUDE TOWARDS INCLUSION OF CSN IN MAINSTREAM CLASS BASED ON CSN CONTACT

Source	df	SS	MS	F	p
Between groups	1	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.91
Within groups	238	126.67	0.53		
Total	239	126.68			

Further, we conducted ANOVA, and we found that there is no difference in the public attitude towards inclusion of CSN in mainstream class $F(1, 238) = 0.01 p = 0.91$.

This is similar to Wong [42] which investigate classmates with children with special needs and non-classmates did not differed significantly.

Besides, Allport [34] also suggest that beside having contact there are several aspect that need to be considered to lessen prejudice such as equal status, cooperation, common goals, and support from social and institutional authorities. We found that there are some support from the government as the authorities[15], but there are some indications that was not investigate in this research whether the participants assumed that people with impairments or developmental problems have the same equal rights

C. Attitude towards the inclusion of CSN in mainstream class in Indonesia on people who have different occupations background.

Previous research found that there are differences between people from different occupation background, people from education-related occupations tend to have more positive attitude towards inclusion of CSN in mainstream education.

But based on the mean analysis presented in Table V, we found that participants with unskilled / semi-skilled occupation have the highest means ($M = 3.16, SD = 0.73$), followed by participants with professional occupation ($M = 3.0, SD = 0.66$), and participants with skilled occupation ($M = 2.88, SD = 0.66$), and participants with education-related occupation has the least mean ($M = 2.7, SD = 0.68$).

TABLE V. MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF ATTITUDE TOWARDS INCLUSION OF CSN IN MAINSTREAM CLASS ON HAVING CSN CONTACT

Occupations categories	M	SD	N	Scheffe Comparison		
Unskilled / semi-skilled	3.16	0.73	45			
Skilled	2.88	0.74	108	> 0.1		
Professional	3.0	0.66	30	> 0.1	> 0.1	

Occupations categories	M	SD	N	Scheffe Comparison		
Education related	2.7	0.68	43	<0.05	> 0.1	> 0.1

The ANOVA analysis in Table VI showed that there is a significant difference in participants with different occupation background $F(3, 222) = 3.04 p = 0.03$. Based on the Scheffe Comparison in the post-hoc, we found that the difference in located in between participants who have unskilled / semi-skilled occupation and participants with education-related occupation.

TABLE VI. SUMMARY OF ANOVA OF ATTITUDE TOWARDS INCLUSION OF CSN IN MAINSTREAM CLASS BASED ON OCCUPATION

Source	df	SS	MS	F	p
Between groups	3	4.65	1.55	3.04	0.03
Within groups	222	113.37	0.51		
Total	225	118.02			

This result is quite different to previous research which found teachers or education-related occupations have positive attitude towards the inclusion of CSN in mainstream class [38, 43, 44]. But this result can be understood considering teachers in mainstream education showed frustration and insecurity and lack of competence in teaching CSN in mainstream class[45, 46], there is a possibility participants in this research consider about this.

D. Attitude towards the inclusion of CSN in mainstream class in Indonesia based on having heard of inclusive education term.

Based on the analysis presented in Table 8, we found that there is a difference between participants who have heard of inclusive education and who have not heard of inclusive education. In which participant who have heard of inclusive education term have a neutral attitude ($M = 3.00, SD = 0.74$), meanwhile participants who have not heard of inclusive education term have a negative attitude towards inclusion of CSN in mainstream education ($M = 2.76, SD = 0.68$).

TABLE VII. MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF ATTITUDE TOWARDS INCLUSION OF CSN IN MAINSTREAM CLASS BASED ON HAVING HEARD OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION TERM

Have heard of inclusive education	M	SD	N
Yes	3.00	0.74	157
No	2.76	0.68	83

The mean difference is strengthened by the ANOVA result which we can see from table 10. Summary of the Analysis of Variance that showed there is a significant difference $F(1, 239) = 5.89 p = 0.02$ between participants.

TABLE VIII. SUMMARY OF ANOVA OF ATTITUDE TOWARDS INCLUSION OF CSN IN MAINSTREAM CLASS BASED ON HAVING HEARD OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION TERM

Source	df	SS	MS	F	p
Between groups	1	3.06	3.06	5.89	0.02
Within groups	238	123,62	0.52		
Total	239	126.68			

Based on the result, we found that parents who have heard of inclusive education has a more positive attitude compare to parents who have not heard of inclusive education. This research found that familiarity seemed to contribute to the attitude towards inclusion of CSN in mainstream classes.

People who is familiar with inclusive education terms seemed to have a better understanding of why and how CSN are included to mainstream classes. This is aligned with a research that found that the people’s increased familiarity on certain subject seemed to predict enhanced one’s favorable attitude [39].

E. Acceptance of CSN in mainstream class.

There were 12 questions were excluded in the questionnaire but there are 4 question which were very interesting and important, therefore the 4 questions were analyzed in this section.

Participants were asked some related questions about their preferences on children who should be included in mainstream education.

TABLE IX. SUMMARY OF ACCEPTANCE OF CSN IN MAINSTREAM CLASS

Questions	Response in percentage		
	Disagree	Un-decided	Agree
If I have a typical developing child, I would not mind if children with special needs are included in my child’s class	11,7	13,3	75
If I have a child with special needs, I would like my child be in the mainstream education	30,2	26,5	43,3
I agree if children with physical impairment such as impairment or disability of sight, hearing, paralyzed, etc.	40,8	22	37,1
I agree if students with developmental problems such as autism, hyperactivity, intellectual disability, speech delayed, learning difficulties, etc.	46,2	26,9	26,9

In the first question, participants were placed in a situation if they have TDC and asked whether they mind if CSN join their TDC classroom or not. Based on the data presented, most of the participants (75%) agreed to include CSN in their child’s mainstream class. It is quite significant compare to the participants who did not agree (11.7%) or undecided (13.3%).

The number of participants who strongly disagreed and who disagreed are slightly different, participants who disagreed are 3.3% more than participants who strongly disagreed. But for participants who agreed and strongly agreed there is almost no difference in the percentage.

But it is quite interesting to see diverse opinion when participants were given a different situation in which assumed they have a CSN and asked if they would like their CSN join the mainstream education. Even though there are many participant who would like their CSN be placed in mainstream education (43.3%), but close to the participants that agreed, 30.2% participants would mind if their CSN join the mainstream education, meanwhile there are also 26.5% participants who could not decide if the they want their CSN be placed in mainstream classroom or not.

There are also some differences between the percentage of participants who strongly agreed and agreed, and participants who are strongly disagreed and disagreed. Participants who disagreed are 6.6% more than participants who strongly disagreed. The same thing was also happened to in participants who agreed and strongly agreed, participants who agreed are 7.7% more than participants who strongly disagreed.

One of the reasons is the type of special needs that can be included in mainstream class, therefore some questions concerned this issue were also asked. The percentage of participants who thought CSN with physical impairments or disabilities (such as sight impairment, blind, hearing impairments, deaf, paralyzed, or some physical impairments) are included in the mainstream classroom are quite even, there are 40.8% participants who did not agree if children with physical impairments or disabilities join the mainstream class.

But there are also 37.1 % participants who agree if children with physical impairments are included in mainstream education. Meanwhile 22% participant could not decide if they want this type of special needs be included in mainstream education.

Different from physical impairment, most participants disagreed if children with developmental problems be included in mainstream class (46.2%), meanwhile the percentage of participants who agreed and undecided are even (26.9%). There are almost no difference in the percentage of participants who strongly disagreed and who disagreed, but participants who are agreed are 6.5% more than participants who strongly agreed.

V. CONCLUSION

We found that participants have a slightly negative attitude on inclusion of CSN in mainstream class, but when we see further in the additional question, when given a scene if they mind when a CSN student learns in the same class with their children, 65 percent of the participants agreed, therefore we can conclude that participants hold neutral attitude towards inclusion of CSN in mainstream class.

There is no difference between participants who have CSN contact and who do not have any CSN contact, but there are some significant difference in the people who have heard about

inclusive education and also in participants who came from education-related occupations.

The type of impairments and or disabilities should also be put in consideration as we can see on the result, where 40,8 percent participants did disagree on letting CSN in mainstream class while the other 37,1 did agree. But on the developmental impairments types, participants seems more reluctant to include CSN in mainstream education with 46,3 percent participant disagreed to include CSN in mainstream education, while 20,9 agreed. So we can conclude that participants are more favorable in including children with physical impairments and or disabilities than children with developmental impairments or disabilities.

This is similar with other research which found that children with physical impairments or disabilities were more favoured [47, 48], therefore a more thorough investigation about this matter is needed.

VI. LIMITATION

There are some limitations in this research therefore conclusion made from this research should be put in consideration. The main limitation of this research is this research used convenient sampling, which resulted in unequal sample size for each categories. The participants in this research mostly are younger (20-25 years old), do not have children, have heard of inclusive education, have college education background, and work in skilled occupation. The online survey that this research adapt also limited the participants to people that have access to internet.

The instrument used in this research Attitude towards Including CSN in Mainstream Class Questionnaire is newly developed instrument by researcher, which needs improvements and more validations.

The additional being asked to the participants are only about types of impairments or disabilities or problems, but not about severity, it is suggested that the future research included this information also.

Based on the result, we found that the perception of people with special needs might related to the attitude towards inclusion of CSN in mainstream education, therefore the investigation about people perception on people with special needs and attitude towards inclusion of CSN in mainstream class will give a comprehensive picture of the attitude towards inclusive education.

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